

- Rep. John Hall Votes for a 58 Percent Increase in Funding for Veterans - Washington, DC —

Building on his stalwart advocacy for Hudson Valley veterans, U.S. Rep. John Hall (D- Dover) today helped the House of Representatives pass for the first time advanced appropriations for veterans health care, as well as \$108.9 billion for veterans medical care, claims processors, and facility improvements. This is the third budget in a row that exceeds the request of the Independent Budget, which is formulated by a coalition of veterans' organizations. The fiscal year 2010 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill passed today with bipartisan support and provides vital funding for troops, veterans, and their families. Today's bill builds on the \$17.7 billion in historic increases for veterans passed into law by Congress since Hall came to Congress in January 2007.

Congressman Hall has been a strong supporter of advanced funding for veterans health care. Historically, funding for the VA has been late in reaching its many critical programs. To fix this, earlier this year Congressman Hall helped introduce H.R. 1016, the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009, a bill which requires that the Department of Veterans Affairs be funded one year in advance.

"The budget for VA has been passed late for nineteen of the last twenty years," said Hall. "This is absolutely deplorable and forces the VA to ration healthcare to veterans. By passing advance VA funding, we in Congress today displayed a commitment to providing quality care for our veterans and will no longer allow it to be compromised by budget delays." With passage of this bill, Congress has provided a 58 percent increase in funding for veterans health care and benefits under Democratic Leadership of Congress. This funding has resulted in a total increase of 8,300 claims processors, 145 community-based outpatient clinics, 70 Vet Centers, and more than 47,000 additional Veterans Health Administration employees.

"These additional resources will provide our veterans with their benefits more quickly and improve access to health care and other services," said Hall.

Congress has also funded several initiatives to improve the quality of life for our military and their families to include: \$2.8 billion for new military hospitals, \$1 billion for new child care centers to serve 20,000 military children, and \$570 million in additional funding for barracks.

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